



2022 Freedom Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir, Wadensvil Clone

AVA: Mt. Pisgah-Polk County

LOCATION: Bursell Rd.

ELEVATION: 500'

SOIL TYPE: Bellpine (ancient seabed)

YEAR PLANTED: 2004

CLONAL MATERIAL: Wadensvil

VINEYARD SIZE: 3.03-acre block

PICKING DATE: October 12th

TONS/ACRE: 13.1 tons; 4.32 tons/acre

OWNER: Dan and Helen Dusschee

PRODUCTION: 486 cases bottled

Site History: The vineyard was established in 1982 by the people who still own and manage it to this day: Dan and Helen Dusschee. While they may not have realized it at the time, they were settling onto a site destined to be one of the top Pinot Noir vineyards in the state of Oregon. Their rigorous and professional approach to the management of the vineyard has brought about that greatness, and even though the vineyard suffered through a scourge of phylloxera replanting's, expansion of the site has shown that there is a distinct and indomitable terroir. Few non-estate vineyards in Oregon can reach as far back in history with regards to being bottled as a single vineyard designated wine as Freedom Hill Vineyard. Panther Creek Winery began designating the site in the late 80s. St. Innocent began doing so in the early 90s. In 2013 their son, Dustin, rejoined the farm and began taking over day-to-day management operations. Even while expanding to slightly over 90 acres over the years, this vineyard remains a family owned, lived upon, and operated venture, something that is becoming increasingly rare and, thus, that much more special in Oregon.

Site Characteristics: Freedom Hill Vineyard lies toward the eastern edge of the Coast Range Foothills. While associated geographically with the Eola Hills, the site lies south and west of the border of the Eola-Amity Hill Appellation outside of the town of Monmouth. The vineyard is planted on a marine sedimentary type of soil known as Bellpine. The vineyard is also located just south of the Van Duzer wind corridor which allows for more consistent average temperatures due to a lack of afternoon and evening offshore breezes rolling through. This site is known for powerful or, at least, extremely intense Pinot Noirs. Wines tend to be very dark in color and operate on the blue, purple, and black end of the fruit spectrum. Tannin structure can be impressive. This vineyard has the capacity to produce some of the most extraordinary wine made in the state.

The Block: Since 2012 when we initially began sourcing fruit from Freedom Hill Vineyard, we have chosen a sub-set of the different blocks to bottle based upon the clone within the block. Not all blocks in this (or any vineyard for that matter) are equal. For instance, we get Dijon 115 from three separate parts of the vineyard, but the Dijon 115 bottling comes entirely from one of those sections. In 2016 we were offered a block of Wadensvil next to that very block of Dijon 115 by which we are impressed. These two blocks are adjacent and near the highest point in the vineyard. Another winery chose to not renew its lease in this block, and we stepped into an interesting situation. The block was, oddly, under much more duress than our Dijon 115 despite its proximity. We devised a plan with the Dusschees to restore the vine health in the block and get this section of the vineyard back on track. In 2017 we did a small bottling from this block and every vintage since this has been one of the top bottlings from the entire winery.

Farming Practices: Since 2013 Freedom Hill Vineyard has been moving diligently and consistently from conventional farming practices to organic farming. While not 100% turned to organic practices it is closer to that than it is too so-called "sustainable farming." Great attention has been paid to specific cover cropping, foliar feeding, and cultivation. The result is a healthier vineyard with a greater range of blocks producing single vineyard quality style wines.

Picking Dates, Tonnages, Tons/Acre: October 12th; East Liberty Wadensvil 13.1 tons (4.32 tons/acre). The numbers alone tell a story. However, the tale runs far deeper. Shortly after the valley-wide frost event it seemed that, at best, we would receive a crop of 20% of normal from Freedom Hill Vineyard. Nothing could be further from the truth. A recovery of staggering portions combined with an amazing stretch of weather from mid-September through the end of harvest in later October allowed this vineyard to produce a record crop. This is nearly a 60% increase in production off this section of the vineyard over 2021.

Vinification: For this bottling there were 9 fermenters in total, 2 of which were done 40% whole cluster and 2 that were completely destemmed. The final 5 were all done 100% whole cluster. In the final blend 8 of the 20 barrels came from both the 100% whole cluster fermenters and the destemmed fermenters with just 4 from the 40% whole cluster fermenters rounding it out.

Winemaking: Even with a substantial number of fermenters spread across a range of whole cluster options fermentations were managed consistently by a combination of pumpovers early in the process and exclusively prior to fermentation beginning as well as pigeages to ensure gentle handling, extraction, and delicate tannin construction. Cold soaks were generally 3-4 days with 4-5 days on the 100% whole cluster fermenters being the norm. Full fermentation from beginning to pressing was 16-17 days with a couple of days longer for the heavier whole cluster fermenters. 24-48 hour settling prior to being racked to barrel. All wines on full lees until assemblage for bottling. Bottled without fining or filtration.

Barrels: For this 20-barrel bottling there were 3 new barrels (15%), and 10 once-filled barrels (50%). Past that the wine was a combination of largely 3 and 4 times used barrels with a couple of completely neutral barrels to round it all out.

Notes: If there is a winery in Oregon with a greater love for the Wadensvil Clone of Pinot Noir I would be extremely surprised. We source this not widely planted clone from 6 different vineyards, including our Estate, and are now producing 4 distinct bottlings meant to show off these clones' contribution to terroir. We find that Wadensvil has a unique ability to bring red-fruited characteristics, both aromatically and in the flavors, even into environments where darker fruits are far more the norm. This push and pull sort of dynamic within the context of the other facets of the wine's terroir helps create an extra level of complexity and nuance in the best situations. Certainly, here at Freedom Hill Vineyard, known for dark and powerful wines, this attribute creates a wine unique across the many bottlings we do from this site. While still containing the full textural experience of Freedom Hill this has a sense of calm to it that the wilder wines from here do not have. This is full on and demure at the same time.

Over the years Oregon has changed from a place where getting to 2 tons/acre on grape farming was a luxury to one where having a heavier load is necessary to keep ripening in check and to allow for appropriate hangtime. This tonnage level in, say, 1998 would have seemed outrageous and the fruit likely would have been all sorts of underripe. These days keeping on extra fruit can be part of the elements that make a wine as good as its normal potential is. While this seems counter-intuitive the results are clear in this and, frankly, all the 2022 Freedom Hill Vineyard bottlings we made. This is a beautiful and restrained wine operating in a very dynamic and intense vineyard environment. No doubt this wine will last for years and years.

This finished with a TA of 6.3, a pH of 3.38 and was bottled with under 25 ppm free SO₂ and less than 65 ppm total SO₂.